

**COVID-19****More** **Saskatchewan**

## **Hotel owner says Métis Nation—Sask. president dismissed repeated warnings to follow COVID-19 rules**

Resort community's largest hotel now closed for several days of extensive cleaning

[Jason Warick](#) · CBC News · Posted: Sep 22, 2020 5:00 AM CT | Last Updated: September 22, 2020



The Hawood Inn in Waskesiu, Sask., is closed until Friday for cleaning after Metis Nation-Saskatchewan President Glen McCallum tested positive for COVID-19 while attending meetings there. (Hawood Inn/Facebook)

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Métis Nation—Saskatchewan (MN-S) president Glen McCallum ignored pleas to follow COVID-19 protocols during a two-day meeting at a Waskesiu hotel last week, according to the hotel's owner.

McCallum got tested for COVID-19 last Tuesday, but did not isolate as he awaited the result. He attended the Waskesiu meetings with more than two dozen members of MN-S administration and government. McCallum received word Friday during the meeting that he had tested positive for COVID-19.

The Hawood Inn is now closed for extensive cleaning. Owner Nancy Wood said they'd just completed major renovations to improve ventilation and safety for customers and staff, and the sudden closure is devastating.

"He seemed to just have his own rules. He was really rude," Wood said in an interview Monday.

"This really pisses me off. Why couldn't he just be responsible?"

At least five people who attended meetings now have COVID-19 symptoms, according to a senior MN-S official who attended. These people and others remain in lockdown or isolation in their own homes or in hotels, said an official.

- **Several showing COVID-19 symptoms after attending meetings with Métis Nation — Sask. president, says official**

Wood and others confirm McCallum did not wear a mask during the meetings, in the restaurant or in the hotel's common areas. They also say no one informed them McCallum was awaiting results of a COVID-19 test.





Métis Nation-Saskatchewan president Glen McCallum, who has tested positive for COVID-19, ignored warnings to follow protocols as he awaited his test result, says a Waskesiu hotel owner. (Submitted by Métis Nation-Saskatchewan)

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Wood said she asked McCallum on more than one occasion to wear a mask in certain areas, but he refused. He also refused to wait for her to clean their restaurant table before sitting, she said.

"I said I had to sanitize it. Those are the rules. He told me, 'I know the people who were here so it's OK.' Then they just sat down. I didn't know what else to do," Wood said.

Before the Friday morning session began, Hawood staff arranged for the MN-S to use the large banquet room, which has a capacity of more than 100. They set up separate two-metre long tables for each MN-S delegate to ensure physical distancing, Wood said.

McCallum told staff to put the tables and seats closer together, but Wood and her staff said no. Wood said that when she looked in on the meeting later that morning, the seating arrangements had all been changed.

Wood said the meeting had 28 official delegates, which is less than the maximum of 30 allowed by provincial COVID-19 restrictions. However, they also brought in people to operate their sound system and other duties.

"So I'm pretty sure they broke that rule, too," she said.

Wood also has questions about the timing of Friday's events. She said McCallum left the meetings and the hotel by noon, but one of the attendees said an MN-S staff person didn't tell participants of McCallum's positive test until approximately 2:45 p.m. CST.

Wood said MN-S officials didn't tell her or Hawood staff until approximately 5:00 p.m. CST. The MN-S issued a public statement confirming McCallum's positive test at 5:45 p.m. CST.

## Hotel could lose tens of thousands

More than half of the Hawood's 34 hotel rooms and seven condos were booked last weekend and through this week. Wood said she was also counting on brisk restaurant business because of the major golf tournament in Waskesiu this week. The professional cleaning company Wood hired won't be done until Friday, so all of that business is gone.

It could end up costing tens of thousands of dollars and business interruption insurance doesn't cover this situation, she said. She wants McCallum or the MN-S to pay for it.

Wood said the hotel had only been open for three weeks. Over the summer, they shut down to install new ventilation, glass partitions and other infrastructure. From masks to distancing to rigorous cleaning, she said they took great pride in providing a safe destination.

"We tried to do everything right," she said.

Waskesiu Community Council chair Jim Kerby said the Hawood is the biggest hotel in town and its closure hurts all other businesses.

He said Wood and her staff have done a "fantastic job" to make their business safe for everyone, and was sad to hear about last week's events.

"This was brought to our community. The entire province needs to reflect on this. If you are waiting for test results, you've got to do the right thing. Stay home," Kerby said.

"This business owner has tried so hard to do the right thing. It's not fair. But I have no doubt when the Hawood opens again [Friday], it will be safe."

The Hawood is not the only business affected. The Saskatchewan Health Authority issued a warning for Saskatoon, Rosthern and Prince Albert over the weekend about an individual who "was likely infectious" when frequenting a list of golf courses, steak houses, a coffee shop and a hotel, along with the Hawood Inn, in recent days.

- **Health Authority flags 12 businesses in six communities for potential COVID-19 exposures**

## MN-S says McCallum was not told to isolate

Other Saskatoon municipal and provincial political candidates said they're getting tested after meeting McCallum at various events during the two-week infectious period.

Neither McCallum nor the MN-S gave an interview for this story. An MN-S official emailed to say they've reached out to Wood and hope to talk to her soon.

In a social media post Sunday, McCallum said he appreciates all the support he's received since being diagnosed. He said he will follow all public health guidelines and is urging others to do the same.

In posts over the weekend, the MN-S said McCallum was asymptomatic and was not told to isolate. The MN-S statement said shaming people is not helpful.

"It is profoundly disappointing to see some individuals and politically motivated gossip sites engaging in unfounded rumour-mongering and finger-pointing during a serious public health crisis," read the statement.

Wood said this isn't political or "rumour-mongering." She said McCallum and the MN-S simply need to be held accountable for the damage they caused.

"There are rules," Wood said. "There should be consequences."